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ABSTRACT

A supervisory program for teachers at the Riverside School, Menomonee Falls, Wisconsin, is based upon two objectives: (1) to make teachers more aware of their classroom behavior, and (2) to insure students of adequate instruction. The four phases of the program are: (1) a teacher-initiated request for observation; (2) classroom observation by the principal focusing upon technical skills requested by the teacher; (3) planning by the principal of a teacher-principal conference on the same day as the observation; and (4) a teacher-principal conference. An evaluation of the program's effectiveness is obtained by use of a Satisfaction Survey completed by all fourth and fifth grade teachers in four district schools. The Teacher Request Form for Supervisory Observation, Supervisory Observation of the Technical Skills of Teaching form, and the Supervisory Observation of Student Reactions form are provided. A table presents the mean numerical ratings on statements from the Satisfaction Survey. (DB)

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INITIAL EVALUATION OF A SYSTEM APPROACH TO SUPERVISION

by

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Supervision of teachers has always been a great concern to the writer. The theoretical approaches presented in many college courses, textbooks and the actual attempt to apply these theories to individual classroom situations seems so inadequate. Such approaches appear to focus too subjectively in evaluating classroom teachers' performance. Consequently, this program instituted at Riverside School, Menomonee Falls, Wisconsin is an attempt to focus more objectively on the teaching act and eliminate the global supervisory approach to supervision.

At Riverside the supervision of teachers is based upon two objectives: 1) to make teachers more aware of their classroom behavior so that they might be more effective and thus increase pupils' learning; 2) to insure students of adequate instruction. In trying to attain these goals the writer developed a supervisory program based upon the technical skills of teaching.

This program was proposed and explained to the faculty of Riverside School during the annual in-service training program in September, 1970. The supervisory program reflects the basic assumption that a series of observation-conference sequences is more effective than less frequent and more global observations.

There are four distinct phases in this program for supervision of teachers:

1) A request for observation, initiated by the teacher, containing clearly definable technical skills of teaching
2) Classroom observation by the principal focusing only on the technical skills requested by the teacher
3) Planning by the principal of a teacher-principal conference to be held the same day as the observation

4) A teacher-principal conference to discuss the results of the skills observed along with a mutually agreed future focus for the teacher

In order for a teacher to initiate this supervisory program, she submits a request form to the principal (see Form I, Teacher Request Form for Supervisory Observation) indicating the technical skill she wishes the principal to observe. The principal enters her classroom at the time indicated by the teacher. During this teacher observation, the principal concentrates upon the performance of the specific technical skill indicated on the request form. He takes notes or tape records the lesson if the teacher has previously agreed to such a recording.

Following this teacher observation, the principal plans for the teacher-principal meeting to be held later the same day. This planning includes the rating of the teacher on the skill that she previously agreed to focus upon (see Form II, Supervisory Observation of the Technical Skills of Teaching). The principal's notes and/or audio tape from the observation are the basis for the rating. Another rating of the teacher is in terms of pupil behavior (see Form III, Supervisory Observation of Student Reactions) as observed by the principal.

In the teacher-principal conference itself, a great deal of flexibility is exercised depending upon the personality of both principal and teacher. While the principal's rating forms will probably be a main focus of attention, the self-evaluation of the teacher may be very valuable to this conference.

Furthar, in evaluating the rating sheets (Form II and/or III) the teacher or the principal may note an area for improvement not discussed before. Specific suggestions for eliminating this particular problem may well be treated. In fact, it may be that both the teacher and the principal will agree to focus upon this area in succeeding observations and conferences.

Such teacher-principal conferences may lead to discovering other problems that confront the teacher. Such problems may include the teacher's choice of educational goals, her need for alternative teaching materials or activities, means of improving pupils' self-discipline, or ways of helping a particular child.

As a result of this supervisory program, teachers have been encouraged to participate in college and university coursework, reading, classroom visitation and discussion with other teachers in the system, and continued practice and self-analysis of teaching skills.

The response to this voluntary program of supervision at Riverside School was almost unanimous. In the cases of the few teachers who did not request supervision, the principal notified them that he would visit their rooms at a certain time and date. He observed the classroom activities of these teachers by focusing on three or four aspects of each teacher's instructional behavior. The teacher-principal conferences were held the same day as the observation with both the teacher and the principal agreeing upon future focus of technical skills of teaching.

Totally, 167 formal observation-conference cycles were held with an average of nine for beginning teachers and five for experienced teachers. The length of time for each classroom observation depended on the skill selected by the teacher. Most observations averaged twenty minutes with conferences lasting on an average of twenty-five minutes.

At the conclusion of this school year, some data from the program permits an initial evaluation of its effectiveness. Teachers' attitudes concerning the value of this program are shown through the results of a "Satisfaction Survey" administered by the district school psychologist to all fourth and fifth grade teachers in four district schools (see Table I, Satisfaction Survey).

An open-ended questionnaire completed by the teachers at Riverside School included the following questions and responses:

I. "In your opinion, what are the specific strengths of the program of instructional supervision here at Riverside School?"

> "The model is especially beneficial because it breaks the teaching process down into specific areas and specific skills. In addition, the model sets forth a common framework within which both teacher and supervisor may work."
>
> "The supervision seemed to become more objective, dealing with acts rather than personalities."
>
> "It permits an atmosphere in which mistakes can be made without fear of undue stress."
>
> "It gives immediate feedback, ... provides a basis for comparison with past or future teaching."
>
> "I like to know before supervision what specific skill or skills I will be observed on."
>
> "I like the fact that the teacher can choose a time for her observation."

"..... (the supervisory program) is inclusive as it deals with a range of factors from presentation of materials to motivation ..... also attempts to evaluate pupil responses --- a key factor in evaluating the effectiveness of a teacher."

"Someone is interested in supervising the instruction and is doing something about it."

II. "What are specific weaknesses to which efforts at improving the program should be directed?"

"Increase the frequency."

"Would like even more individual conferences with principal."

"The time factor obviously limits the supervisor's number of observations in each room."

"More time allotted to the administrator for more observation."

"More observations during the year when the teacher is not prepared for the observation."

III. "Specifically, how has this program helped you become a better teacher?"

"This program brings a realization of the many skills necessary in presenting a lesson."

"It has helped in analyzing the specific aspects of presenting a lesson, whether or not it was being observed."

"It made me more critical of myself."

"It has helped me be more conscious of setting specific goals for each lesson and do more self-evaluation of methods I used to attain, or not attain, these goals."

"I found that in the end I was able to evaluate myself and any situation that arose with more insight."

While initial evaluation of the program is positive, the 167 observation-conference cycles and the subjective opinions of teachers are not sufficient data upon which to base decisions as to the total effectiveness of this supervisory program. Measurement and comparison of pupil attainment of instructional goals in schools with different supervisory programs is necessary before one can judge that this particular approach to supervision does indeed improve instruction.

FORM I

TEACHER REQUEST FORM FOR SUPERVISORY OBSERVATION

Teacher's Name _____

Date of Observation _____ Time for Observation _____

Subject and/or Activity to be Observed _____

Objectives of Lesson (defined in behavioral terms):

_____

_____

_____

_____

Skill I plan to focus on: _____

☐ Objectives apparent to students

☐ Room and materials organization

☐ Introduction of lesson

- ☐ Clarity of presentation
- ☐ Stimulate motivation

☐ Presentation of lesson

- ☐ Clarity of presentation
- ☐ Continual motivation
- ☐ Questioning
- ☐ Verbal reinforcement
- ☐ Non-verbal reinforcement
- ☐ Relevant subject matter
- ☐ Demonstration

☐ Closure

- ☐ Completeness of communication
- ☐ Motivation for future learning

☐ Evaluation

- ☐ Questioning
- ☐ Prepared Exam

FORM II

SUPERVISORY OBSERVATION OF THE TECHNICAL SKILLS OF TEACHING

TEACHER_____Grade_____Date_____

Subject_____ACTIVITY_____Time_____

1. Objectives of lesson were

5.....4.....3.....2.....1.....
well defined

5.....4.....3.....2.....1.....
apparent to students

2. The organization of class was

5.....4.....3.....2.....1.....
appropriate for lesson

3. Room and materials were

5.....4.....3.....2.....1.....
well organized

4. Introduction of Lesson (Set)

5.....4.....3.....2.....1.....
clearly presented

5.....4.....3.....2.....1.....
stimulate motivation

5. Presentation of Lesson

5.....4.....3.....2.....1.....
clearly communicated

5.....4.....3.....2.....1.....
continual motivation

5.....4.....3.....2.....1.....
questioning

5.....4.....3.....2.....1.....
verbal reinforcement

5.....4.....3.....2.....1.....
non-verbal reinforcement

5.....4.....3.....2.....1.....
relevant subject matter

5.....4.....3.....2.....1.....
demonstration

6. Closure

5.....4.....3.....2.....1.....
completeness of communication

5.....4.....3.....2.....1.....
motivation for future learning

7. Evaluation

5.....4.....3.....2.....1.....
appropriate questioning

5.....4.....3.....2.....1.....
appropriate written exam

FORM III

SUPERVISORY OBSERVATION OF STUDENT REACTIONS

Date _____ Time _____

Teacher _____ Grade _____ Room _____

Type of class / activity _____

1. Students appeared to be
   5.....4.....3.....2.....1.....
   actively engaged

2. Students seemed to be
   5.....4.....3.....2.....1.....
   interested

3. Most of the class seemed
   5.....4.....3.....2.....1.....
   knowledgeable

4. Student responses were
   5.....4.....3.....2.....1.....
   meaningful

5. Student activities were
   5.....4.....3.....2.....1.....
   well chosen

6. Class routines were
   5.....4.....3.....2.....1.....
   established and followed

7. Class seemed to be
   5.....4.....3.....2.....1.....
   pupil centered

8. Class atmosphere seemed
   5.....4.....3.....2.....1.....
   respectful and friendly

9. Student opinions and ideas were
   5.....4.....3.....2.....1.....
   respected

10. Most students seemed
    5.....4.....3.....2.....1.....
    well prepared

COMMENTS _____

_____

_____

TABLE I

RIVERSIDE SCHOOL TEACHERS' MEAN NUMERICAL RATINGS ON STATEMENTS DEALING WITH INSTRUCTIONAL SUPERVISION FROM "SATISFACTION SURVEY"

Scale:

0 = strongly disagree
1 = disagree
2 = moderately disagree
3 = undecided
4 = moderately agree
5 = agree
6 = strongly agree

Statement	Mean rating, fourth & fifth grade teachers at Riverside
My supervisor is interested in helping me improve my job.	6.00
My supervisor keeps me constantly informed of his view of my work.	4.16
My supervisor has a good idea of my strong points.	4.67
My supervisor seeks ways to better understand my viewpoint.	6.00
I feel free to discuss job problems with my supervisor.	5.33
I agree with my supervisor's opinion about my work.	5.33
I have opportunities to learn new skills.	6.00
My supervisor shows he is sincerely interested in me as a person.	5.67
My organizational unit has high morale.	6.00